

POK: 14: Guns to Pakistan

The decision to resume some military aid to Pakistan reflects the nonpolitical maintenance mentality of our Pentagon advisers and the cynicism of our State Department experts.

Our military people are distressed if the American equipment in Pakistan is not kept shiny and ready for use; they sympathize with Pakistanis who could not replace tools of war destroyed in the recent unsuccessful attacks against India. A military machine has its own intrinsic value, it seems, and the fact that Pakistan has used it only against India and Afghanistan, two countries friendly to the U.S., should be disregarded.

The State Department no doubt recalls that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi will visit us this month. It is aware of the fact that no U.S. policy has been so consistently irritating to India as our military support of Pakistan.

The State Department people are politically conscious; so they have calculated what effect our new decision will have on Mrs. Gandhi's visit and on our relations with the major anti-Communist state in Asia. They know that well-maintained arms can be put to some use.

That is why the State Department issued statements in the 1950s that American arms would not be misused by Pakistan, that the U.S. would side with India if Pakistan attacked; so one cannot criticize the State Department's lack of concern for the political side of a military aid program.

And now, conscious of the fact that Indians were recently killed with American weapons, the State Department stresses the "non-lethal" character of American equipment soon to be shipped; political wisdom teaches that a potential victim of attack dis-

tinguishes between, let us say, a bomb and the aircraft that delivers it.

One must search beneath the standard political reasoning, however, to locate the State Department's real attitude toward Indo-Pakistani affairs. The attitude is cynical, born out of the results that have come from our government's treating "India and Pakistan on a par in its military aid policies."

As a fatuous "reward" for the tentative progress being made by India and Pakistan toward a peaceful settlement of their disputes the U.S. has agreed to fresh supplies of arms to both parties, the request having been made by Pakistan. This is supposed to encourage further steps in subcontinental peacemaking: the greater the chances of peace, the larger (and more "lethal") become our arms shipments.

The cynicism here is that our government is not so concerned with peace as it is with the continuance of some American influence, especially in Pakistan.

The correct long-term assumption for U.S. policy, which the State Department seldom catches sight of but which your editorials suggest, is that with American-supported economic development programs as "rewards" both countries can be induced to make permanent peace with each other. The fact that Pakistan demands arms to pursue its own purposes need not preclude a redefinition of our purposes. This redefinition should be premised on an India strong enough to deter China, and peaceful economic development in the subcontinent.

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